

Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

Facilitated by the Minneapolis Health Department

Thursday, February 28, 2013

10:00 – 11:30am

**Location: Operation Living Hope food shelf
(2201 Girard Ave N, Minneapolis)**



Participants

- Donna Bonicatto – Salvation Army Center City Office food shelf
- Jared Walhowe – Minnesota Project
- Jessica Hering – Salvation Army NEED food shelf
- Laura Skubric – EFN
- Sophia Lenarz-Coy – EFN
- Rachel Henderson – Waite House food shelf
- Andrea Nettles – Waite House food shelf
- Jacob Schuster – Catholic Charities food shelf
- Olufemi Adisa – Good Works food shelf
- Jen Schultz – Little Kitchen food shelf
- Michelle Graves – CES food shelf
- Sara Nelson-Pallmeyer – MN FoodShare
- Annie Malone – Operation Living Hope food shelf
- Copper Harding – Little Kitchen food shelf
- Siri Simons – Minneapolis Health Department
- Kristen Klingler – Minneapolis Health Department

Meeting Notes

Spotlight on the Operation Living Hope food shelf:

Annie Malone presented information on the organization's background and current operations. The Operation Living Hope food shelf is regularly open on Wednesday evenings but also provides emergency food shelf services throughout the week to about 700 North Minneapolis residents a month. The food shelf offers a client choice model. Operation Living Hope is one of 7 food shelves receiving technical assistance from the Minneapolis Health Department which includes a food shelf enhancement designed to make healthy food items more attractive and visible to clients. The food shelf now displays healthy food signage, has a recipe shelf of healthy ingredients and a corresponding recipe card, and highlights produce and other healthy items using baskets. **If you have any questions about their efforts to increase healthy foods, please contact Annie Malone at annie@olivinghope.org.** Thank you to Annie for hosting our meeting!

How to increase the visibility and attractiveness of healthy foods in your food shelf:

Would you like to increase the visibility and attractiveness of healthy food items in your food shelf? You can help direct clients toward healthy options, and create higher demand for these items, by arranging things more like a grocery store using the following simple suggestions:

- Look at your existing food shelf layout and identify areas for improvement
 - Are food items grouped into similar categories to make it easier for clients to “shop” the shelves?
 - Are healthy foods easily identified and visible as soon as clients walk in?
 - Are your shelves neatly organized with items brought to the front and labels facing out?
- Make a few simple changes to highlight healthy items and improve client experience
 - Arrange like items together on the shelves and label them so that everyone can easily find what they’re looking for. Use shelf labels to clearly identify what products should be placed where.
 - Place items in orderly rows and bring packages to the front of the shelving unit with their labels facing outward.
 - Use signage to help clients identify healthy food items, especially fresh produce that might be hidden behind a cooler/refrigerator door.
 - Use baskets and bins to attractively display healthy items in a visible location.
 - Create a recipe shelf that is stocked with all of the basic ingredients needed to make a healthy recipe. Include a recipe card for clients to take home.
- Download free signage (available at the Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network project website, under the Resources section)
 - “Choose Healthy Food” poster
 - “Choose Me, I’m a Healthy Item” shelf tag
 - “Don’t Forget Fresh Produce” sign
 - “Food Category” shelf labels
 - Santa Fe Chicken Pilaf recipe card
- Food shelves that are interested in receiving technical assistance on how to enhance your food shelf should contact Kristen (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov). In addition to guidance on how to modify your food shelf layout, you will receive a complete set of free, full-size, laminated signage including posters, shelf labels, and recipe cards.

Communicating your need for healthy food donations

Communications materials: Spring is a busy time for food shelf fundraising – many of you will be participating in the March campaign or will be talking with donors and the general public about donating to your food shelf. Use this opportunity to promote healthy food donations and cash donations to purchase healthy foods.

The Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network has the following resources available for you to use (all materials can be downloaded for free on the Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network project [website](#)):

- “Donate Healthy Foods” poster (posters were distributed to meeting participants; please contact Kristen if your food shelf would like to receive one to hang in your building)

- “How to Support Food Shelves” brochure (brochures were distributed to meeting participants; please contact Kristen if your food shelf would like to receive a stack to distribute)
- Healthy Donations letter template
- www.healthyfoodshelves.org website

Food shelves are encouraged to use these materials and add information about your particular location/donation hours. This can be done by creating a simple paper flyer to insert in the brochure or by creating mailing labels/stickers to affix to the back of the brochure.

Health department staff will continue to develop simple, easy-to-print/copy materials for food shelves to use to promote these common messages.

Plant an Extra Row campaign:

One of the Network’s priority issues is connecting food shelves with local sources of healthy food including community and backyard gardeners. Health department staff are working with Mod and Co (communications consultant) to launch a “Plant an Extra Row” campaign to encourage gardeners to plant extra produce this spring and donate to a food shelf in our Network later this summer. We’re working on developing written materials (key messages, newsletter and social media posts, flyers, brochures, website page) that you can use to promote this idea as well as outreach strategies to get the word out, especially among our main target audience – members of the Local Food Resource Hubs Network (700 members in 2012). We’ll also have incentives for gardeners to commit to participating including tote bags and free seed packets.

The following are ways to recruit gardeners to plant a row for your food shelf. Consider using the key messages and other written materials we develop (which will be available in early March) by:

- Coordinate volunteers to door knock in your food shelf’s neighborhood to pass out materials
- Work with other food shelves in your geographic zone to combine efforts
- Send a mailing to individual gardeners in your neighborhood using the written materials we develop
- Reach out to gardening groups and associations using the written materials we develop (through snail or e-mail)
- Integrate key messages, newsletter templates and social media posts into your food shelf’s newsletter and other communications outlets with existing donors

Food bank policies and practices related to healthy foods:

Many food shelves in the Network have expressed interest in working with EFN and Second Harvest Heartland to recommend policy and practice changes related to healthy foods. Existing programs including the food rescue program at Second Harvest are very helpful, however there are a number of issues that food shelves would like the chance to address. The group discussed challenges to healthy food donations and procurement including size and consistency (of availability) of mixed produce and bulk produce pallets/boxes, sharing produce pallets among food shelves, more labeling of healthy food options in online ordering systems, more healthy food options and fewer unhealthy options in online ordering systems, and an organizational commitment to sourcing healthy foods for partner food shelves. Health department staff will draft a letter to provide this feedback to food bank leadership and will share with the group to determine who is interested in attending a meeting to discuss further.

Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

Facilitated by the Minneapolis Health Department

Thursday, April 25, 2013

10:00 – 11:30am

**Location: MN FoodShare/Division of Indian Work
(1001 E Lake St, Minneapolis)**



Participants

- Donna Bonicatto – Salvation Army Center City Office food shelf
- Dave Glenn – Minnesota Project
- Jessica Hering – Salvation Army NEED food shelf
- Laura Skubric – EFN
- Karena Johnson – EFN
- Rachel Henderson – Waite House food shelf
- Francisco Segovia – Waite House food shelf
- Jacob Schuster – Catholic Charities food shelf
- Jen Schultz – Little Kitchen food shelf
- Sara Nelson-Pallmeyer – MN FoodShare
- Courtney – MN FoodShare
- Lisa Boyd – Second Harvest Heartland
- Pa lee Yang – CAPI food shelf
- Fay McLain – University of MN Extension
- Siri Simons – Minneapolis Health Department
- Vish Vasani – Minneapolis Health Department
- Kristen Klingler – Minneapolis Health Department

Meeting Notes

Spotlight on MN FoodShare and the Division of Indian Work food shelf

Information was presented on **MN FoodShare** and current operations.

- MN FoodShare advocates on hunger issues and runs an annual “March Campaign” to raise money for food shelves and hunger organizations.
 - Supporting current legislative action at the State Capitol that would provide \$1 million appropriation for food shelves.
 - Also working at the state level to ensure that children at schools aren’t turned away when parents haven’t paid for reduced-price lunches. Trying to make it unallowable to turn kids away (currently 20% of school districts do not allow free lunch).
 - Advocacy in Washington with MN legislators re: SNAP.
- MN FoodShare partners with the Garden Gleaning Project to support people growing food for food shelves. Focus is on congregations and starting to look at MPHA land that might be available for growing food.

- Recently hired Courtney – new .5 PTE position – she will be working on encouraging congregations to grow food.

Division of Indian Work food shelf (co-located with MN FoodShare) –

- The food shelf focuses on serving the American Indian population. Their efforts are focused on trying to get culturally specific foods into the food shelf while balancing health & nutrition needs. Through various partnerships, they are also looking at land that might be available for their community members to use for growing food.

University of MN - Extension

- Recently created a new category of volunteers called “Master Food Volunteer” – these people could be a great benefit to food shelves or meal programs. They are required to do 40 hours of service to community – which could include education, planning, or outreach. Fay McLain will get more information out to those who are interested.

Second Harvest Heartland (SHH) letter

Partners reviewed draft letter and key recommendations. Lisa Boyd from Second Harvest provided feedback on how to frame the issues before meeting with other leaders. Overall, it was suggested that the letter be framed in a “we need these types of things, and these types of things are what we will buy from you” way, instead of demanding changes. Food shelf partners will reconvene separately to finalize talking points and determine course of action. Jennifer S., Amano D., and Rachel H., are interested in pursuing a conversation with SHH leaders. Other food shelves can volunteer to participate if they are interested too.

- Sharing food products in general – Second Harvest is required to follow Feeding America rules for food banks. In the past, there were cases of abuse which got donors in trouble and caused the rules to become more strict.
 - SHH could explore a more flexible policy and provide oversight if food shelves (that are SHH members) want to share produce pallets. There have already been internal conversations about this, so this is a good recommendation to make as a Network.
- Consistency of produce quality and availability
 - SHH has been receiving and passing along donations of fresh produce for quite some time, but as this food stream increases and begins to take the place of shelf stable food donations that are decreasing, it is a “work in progress” on how best to manage the large quantities and the optimal way to pass these large donations of fresh produce on to food shelves.
 - Recommendation to separate these 2 recommendations since they are viewed separately by SHH leaders (i.e. 1st recommendation is to ensure quality of produce is consistently high; 2nd recommendation is to ensure that produce is available consistently)
- Purchases and donations of healthy food products
 - Recommendation to again separate out these 2 issues: SHH is “sourcer” of food, not “donor” – but they do have a food purchasing budget and they might be open to suggestions for how they can use their \$ to buy more healthy items. The food they get donated will be harder to control.

- Their inventory is based on demand from food shelves, so they need to see that food shelves are buying/requesting only healthy items in order to make changes
- The Network is likely to meet with resistance if we tell SHH to refuse unhealthy donations. Food shelf partners were still interested in pushing back on these issues.

Garden Gleaning Project's Toolkit

- Dave Glenn distributed copies of the toolkit to all food shelves at the meeting. Additional copies can be ordered online through their website: <http://gardengleaning.org/2013/03/05/garden-gleaning-toolkit/>.
- The group briefly reviewed the toolkit content which includes resources and instructions for food shelves and gardeners. A key component to successful gleaning relationships with food shelves and gardeners is to hire a part-time coordinator. Food shelves might want to explore how to collectively apply for Hunger-Free MN grants for this purpose.

Giving Gardens

- Vish Vasani reviewed the health department's proposed work plan to reach out to organizations interested in starting "giving gardens" to donate to food shelves. The health department would play a connecting role (connect food shelves to existing resources that are already working on this issue).
- Alternatively, if organizations are not willing or able to start a giving garden, the health department will encourage cash donations and healthy food drives.
- Initially, we need assistance in figuring out which organizations in Minneapolis to reach out to. Ideas from the group included:
 - U of M Extension is involved in children's gardens – may be a good connection, way to involve kids w/harvest.
 - Boy & Girl Scouts – EFN has worked with them on food drive; they may be interested in doing a service learning project related to gardening but not sure if they have land available
 - Urban 4-H – could be interested in working on this for service learning projects
 - GGP has reached out to Youth Farm successfully
 - Land is a problem – maybe connect to city-owned lots that are available
 - Tamales y Bicicletas – will do mapping of available land in South Mpls/Phillips (in a few months)

Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

Facilitated by the Minneapolis Health Department

Thursday, June 20, 2013

10:00 – 11:30am

**Location: Waite House Food Shelf
(2323 13th Ave S, Minneapolis)**



**EVERYBODY DESERVES
HEALTHY FOOD**

Participants

- Donna Bonicatto – Salvation Army Center City
- Laura Skubric – EFN
- Karena Johnson – EFN
- Andrea Nettles – Waite House
- Jacob Schuster – Catholic Charities
- Lisa Boyd – Second Harvest Heartland
- Karen Carlson – Senior Food Shelf
- Annie Malone – Operation Living Hope
- Marquis Wise – North Point
- Kevin Sanders – Sabathani
- Laura Bohlen – Minneapolis Health Department
- Kristen Klingler – Minneapolis Health Department

Meeting Notes

Spotlight on Waite House food shelf

Information was presented on **Waite House** and current operations.

- Wait House is connecting with the 24th St. Urban Farm, Tamales y Bicicletes to raise awareness of healthy eating. They have noticed more participation in the food shelf recently and are doing more food ordering. As a result, they have increased food storage needs and may rent part of the storage space in the Catholic Charities Branch 1 building. Waite House staff are also writing a new grant to purchase a donation pick-up truck.

Updates/Announcements

- Catholic Charities Branch 1 will be closing its food shelf at the end of July (along with the Dorothy Day food shelf in St Paul). Operations will focus on housing and other direct services to the homeless that Catholic Charities currently provides. Their meal program will be continuing. This month, staff are consulting with clients to match them up with one or two other food shelves in the area that can assist them.

Reflection on Year 1 of the Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

The group reviewed the original purpose of the Healthy Food Shelf Network, priority goals, key activities from Year 1 and major accomplishments. Please see document entitled “Summary of Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments” for additional details.

Moving forward with the Healthy Food Shelf Network

Meeting participants discussed a number of strategic planning questions in small groups before reporting back in a large group conversation. Questions and responses included:

“What purpose has the Healthy Food Shelf Network served over the past year?”

- Convened food shelf representatives on a regular basis to meet each other, share ideas
- Produced a helpful Google map of healthy food outlets (food shelves, community gardens, and farmers markets)
- Served as a guidepost for partners/foundation for organizations
- Good for learning what other organizations do, existing resources (recipes, etc.)

“What purpose could the Network continue to serve going forward? How should it function (structure, meeting frequency, leadership, etc.)?”

- Bi-monthly meetings seem workable; Could alternate days/times of meetings to get more people to come (consider for 2014 meetings since 2013 meetings are already set)
- Good to have MHD as (neutral) convener instead of a food shelf or another agency

“Should the Healthy Food Shelf Network continue working on its current 3 priority areas or establish new priorities? If yes, how can we continue to make progress?”

- The group has done a good job with increasing client demand for healthy foods through the use of promotional signage and displays, but we need to focus more on education
- There is more to do with developing standard communications messages to donor audiences – especially around the idea of making financial donations to food shelves

“Should the Network identify new priorities and strategies to increase the amount of healthy food options available in food shelves?”

Education

- Why healthy foods are good/important for individuals
- Cultural traditions
- Communications materials showing produce, nutrition, cultural heritage, recipe or meal ideas

Grant opportunities to do more things, get more equipment

- Identify grant opportunities for groups & individuals
- Help them apply collectively or individually

Partners want to know about best practices

- Fundraising, inventory, volunteer recruiting
- Highlight some organization at each meeting that has had success in a particular area

Networking

- Facilitate networking at each meeting as well as in between meetings

Planning for the Minneapolis SHIP 3 grant

The group discussed the upcoming health department proposal for the SHIP 3 grant, specifically how to leverage the funding to improve access to healthy foods at food shelves across Minneapolis. Questions and responses included:

How can the Minneapolis Health Department's next round of SHIP funding support food shelves in their efforts to increase access to healthy foods?

- collectively establishing healthy food policies which can then be modified and adopted by individual food shelves
 - Network partners would need to have a conversation about what is considered “healthy” – this would lay foundation for healthy food policy
 - Low-sodium, low-sugar, low-fat focus
 - Guidelines around not accepting unhealthy foods.; meeting minimum USDA guidelines
- expanding the Healthy Food Shelf Network to include meal programs (separate but parallel strategy)
 - This would help with consistency since clients are using both food shelves & meal programs simultaneously
- continued work on current priorities or assistance in identifying and implementing solutions to new priorities

Networking Time

Food shelf representatives and other participants used the remaining meeting time to network with others and discuss shared ideas, challenges, and next steps.

Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

Facilitated by the Minneapolis Health Department

Thursday, August 22, 2013

10:00 – 11:30am

**Location: New Creation Baptist Church Food Shelf
(1414 E. 48th St, Minneapolis)**



Participants

- Donna Bonicatto – Salvation Army Center City
- Lisa Boyd – Second Harvest Heartland
- Shaina Brassard – West Broadway Coalition
- Joan Bulfer – Bloomington Public Health
- Rachel Henderson and Jil Clearman – Waite House
- Kevin Sanders – Sabathani Community Center
- Kelsey Moler and Tracey Porter - PPL
- Marquis Wise – North Point
- Emily Shopek and Alana Carrington – Salvation Army North
- Daniel McKizzie – New Creation
- Brian Noy, Brittany Kimball, and Ellese Ford – Augsburg Campus Kitchen
- Kristen Klingler – Minneapolis Health Department

Meeting Notes

Spotlight on New Creation Baptist Church food shelf

Information was presented on New Creation's current operations.

- In operation for approximately one year, New Creation food shelf serves approximately 300 families on a regular basis from across the metro (no boundaries; clients are just required to show ID). Hours of operation are on Saturdays from 10am-2pm plus emergency deliveries or drop-ins as needed. Clients are able to select food items using a monthly point system (based on family size) and can return as many times as they want, provided they have points to use. The food shelf is run mostly by 4 volunteers plus a coordinator from the church.
- Purchases and donations come primarily from EFN and a local non-profit, Community Care. The food shelf is receiving Plant an Extra Row donations from the Armatage school garden as well as fresh produce from a local neighbor. They are thinking of planting a garden on-site next year as a way to involve their youth. New Creation would like to start offering cooking demos; they already offer healthy recipe cards (from our Network and from EFN).
- In exchange for a monthly stipend, Community Care delivers fresh produce rescued from local retail stores to area food shelves. If you are interested in participating, please contact: Clarence Brown 952-994-9905

Updates/Announcements

- **Plant an Extra Row campaign progress:** 114 Minneapolis gardeners signed up; each matched with 2 food shelves. There were a low number of donations in June and July (6), but things seem

to be increasing as summer progresses (over 100 lbs donated to a handful of food shelves so far). Good selection of high quality fresh produce, but food shelves would love to see more quantity. Gardeners are generally pleased with the ease of donations, but would like to have after-work or weekend drop-off hours.

- **Action Item:** MHD staff will communicate to PAR gardeners that they should call their food shelf in advance to arrange their drop-off and, if needed, request an alternate time (many food shelves are willing to accommodate requests).
- **Minneapolis Health Department SHIP 3 grant proposal:** Grant is due Wednesday, August 28th. Proposed “Healthy Food in the Community” portfolio will include continuation of Healthy Corner Store Program, Healthy Food Shelf Network, and Community Garden efforts. New areas will include meal programs, restaurants, and a sugar-sweetened beverage initiative. The focus of the food shelf and meal program work will be to develop and implement healthy food policies (collectively, and at individual agencies). Healthy food policies will help guide food purchases and donations, meal preparation, donor communications, and client education. More details will be discussed at the October meeting.

Phillips Community Healthy Living Initiative

- Jil and Rachel from Waite House provided an overview of their Blue Cross-funded “Phillips Community Healthy Living Initiative” which consists of four main areas of work: community gardening, food shelves/meal programs, the 24th St Urban Farm, and physical activity.
- The subcommittee working on food shelves/meal programs will likely tackle issues similar to what our Network is working on, however the group will have the ability to define the specific types of projects they want to work on based on community need and interest. In general, the goal is to work on organizational policies related to healthy foods, ensure consistency in messaging to donors and other food shelves, and deeply engage the community in a conversation around healthy food. While specific community engagement activities are yet to be developed, residents will be able to learn more via website and print media.
- So far, there are about 6 (out of 12 potential) partners on board with the food shelf/meal program subcommittee (Waite House, DIW, Holy Rosary, Open Arms, MN American Indian Center, and Centro). These partners will meet regularly to talk about priority issues and take collective action. Some of these partners are also involved in our Network, so staff will coordinate meetings and activities so as not to duplicate efforts.

Farmers Markets and Food Shelves

- Shaina Brassard provided an overview of the EBT/Market Bucks program available at 9 Minneapolis farmers markets. The program allows low-income residents to use their SNAP (food assistance benefits) at farmers markets across the city. If a customer spends at least \$5 on their EBT card, they can receive up to a \$5 match in Market Bucks coupons, which essentially doubles their purchasing power for healthy foods. Most farmers markets also accept WIC vouchers too. Shaina coordinates a communications campaign for all participating markets to help promote the program to target audiences (e.g. bus stop ads and outreach at Century Plaza).
- Food shelves can help connect their clients to this great program by distributing EBT materials to clients (note: materials available from Shaina Brassard, shaina@westbroadway.org if you didn't pick any up at the meeting). Food shelf staff can also explain that some markets allow credit

card users to get tokens to exchange with vendors; similar to the EBT tokens – in case this helps to downplay any stigma associated with using the EBT system. The program will run through October at most markets, so there's still time to promote it to clients or to talk about it in preparation for next season. For a full list of farmers markets including those that offer EBT/Market Bucks, please visit:

http://www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/action/local/sustainability_mplsfarmersmarkets

- Shaina also offered an example of how the West Broadway Farmers Market works with the Ascension Food Shelf in North Minneapolis: Each year, the church congregation holds a fundraiser and the proceeds are used to pay for food shelf clients to receive vouchers to the farmers market. This is an easy system to set up (money isn't lost if the vouchers aren't redeemed) and helps build the habit of shopping at a farmers market and supports local growers as well.
- Brian Noy, Ellese Ford, and Brittany Kimball provided an overview of the Augsburg Campus Kitchen efforts to connect farmers markets and food shelves. Campus Kitchen has been in operation for 10 years; its two main goals are 1) Get healthy food into the community; 2) engage students in their neighborhood and help build leadership capacity to make change. Campus Kitchen serves hot meals with extra food from their community gardens, runs a farmers market at the campus and at the Brian Coyle Center, and conducts education regarding healthy eating/cooking/growing food.
- A new effort this year (funded by a Target grant), is to glean surplus produce from farmers markets and distribute to food shelves. Currently, they are working with 8 markets and four food shelves/recipients (Brian Coyle, Healthy Commons, Korean Service Center, Operation Living Hope). Their goal is to establish long-term relationships between the markets and the food shelves so that there isn't the need for Campus Kitchen to be in the middle. Some challenges they are encountering include market hours not matching up with food shelf hours (and lack of refrigerated storage to keep produce overnight). If your food shelf is interested in partnering with Campus Kitchen, please contact: Brian Noy (noy@augzburg.edu).
- **During the group discussion, participants shared ideas and funding resources that your organization might want to check out:**
 - [Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless grants](#)
 - [Hunger-Free MN grants](#)
 - United Way capacity building grants
 - VEAP Food Shelf in Bloomington may have equipment to give/sell as they move to their new location this fall (Nathan Rust, food shelf manager, 952-888-9616)
- The group also discussed ways in which farmers markets could help communicate with potential donors and encourage customers to donate healthy foods or make financial contributions to food shelves. Ideas included:
 - Signage at the market or a table for a food shelf rep to sit and talk to customers about donating/collect produce (like Second Harvest does at the Municipal market). Midtown market tried this. Alternatively, a market staff or volunteer could sit at the table since food shelves often lack staffing capacity to do this type of outreach.
 - Pre-made messages for distribution through the market's website, social media outlets (could be developed by MHD staff).
 - Retail "round-up" program at grocery stores (e.g. Seward co-op).

Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

Facilitated by the Minneapolis Health Department

Thursday, October 24, 2013

10:00 – 11:30am

**Location: Salvation Army Food Shelf
(2727 Central Ave NE, Minneapolis)**



**EVERYBODY NEEDS
HEALTHY FOOD**

Participants

- Donna Bonicatto – Salvation Army Center City
- Lisa Boyd – Second Harvest Heartland
- Joan Bulfer – Bloomington Public Health
- Marquis Wise – North Point
- Daniel McKizzie – New Creation
- Jacob Schuster – Community Emergency Services
- Bunmi Adekunle – Good Works
- Jen Schultz – Little Kitchen
- Laura Skubic – Emergency Food Shelf Network
- Dave Johnson – Salvation Army
- Fay McLain – Simply Good Eating
- Shelley Sherman - Simply Good Eating
- Kristen Klingler – Minneapolis Health Department

Meeting Notes

Spotlight on Salvation Army (Central Ave location) food shelf

Information was presented on the food shelf's current operations.

- One of eight Salvation Army food shelves; 3rd largest serving 5,118 households/year (11,378 individuals). Serve the 55413, 55414, 55418, and 55421 zip codes. Many clients have used this food shelf for years, and they see generations of families come through the doors.
- In July 2013, transitioned to a client choice model (the 3rd Salvation Army site to do so). They have about 5-9 volunteers every month who help with the client "shopping". Clients are reacting positively; also allows the organization to save money and use their limited resources more efficiently since they are providing food items that clients will choose and eat. Due to space limitations, it's difficult to do extensive reorganization or layout changes, but they have moved things around to highlight things like fresh produce.
- Utilize the United Way nutritional assessment tool to assess their food stock. Also do SNAP outreach (help clients with on-site enrollment) and partner with Second Harvest to do other seasonal activities. Recently started a garden on-site with produce returning to the food shelf.
- Receives food from EFN, Second Harvest, Lund's/Byerly's (where they hire drivers to pick up the donations on a regular basis). They have their own refrigerated truck to do pick-ups for all of the Salvation Army food shelf and meal program sites.

Updates/Announcements

- **Plant an Extra Row campaign progress:** 111 Minneapolis gardeners have donated over 800 pounds of fresh produce to about a dozen food shelves. Gardeners are finding the program easy

to participate in and many are excited to help support their community in this way. MHD staff conducted surveys with food shelf clients in August and will do a follow up survey in October to measure how the program is impacting their access to, and awareness of, healthy food options.

- **Action Item:** MHD staff shared a letter template that food shelf managers can use to thank donors for participating in the program. Contact Kristen if your food shelf wants a list of donors who gave fresh produce to your agency (and their contact information), as well as basic stats about the number/pounds of donations.
- **Minneapolis Health Department SHIP 3 grant proposal:** The department's "Healthy Food in the Community" portfolio will include a continuation of the Healthy Food Shelf Network (including Network meetings and work on healthy food policies, procurement/donations of healthy foods, communications, and client education).

Client education: Partnering with University of MN Extension

Extension staff, Shelley Sherman and Fay McLain, shared information about the Simply Good Eating and Cooking Matters programs and asked food shelves for feedback on how they can help educate clients about the importance of eating healthy foods.

- The programs are funded by the USDA Farm Bill to provide education to low-income SNAP clients. In Minneapolis, 12 Community Nutrition Educators (CNEs, some of whom are bilingual in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong) work mostly in schools, food shelves, parks, subsidized housing sites, and other community locations. They are available to visit food shelves on weekends and evenings, not just during the day.
- Although future program funding is uncertain, educators are interested in supporting food shelf clients in their efforts to eat healthy on a limited budget, prepare healthy meals, and understand the importance of good nutrition.
- Common challenges are that people don't know how to easily prepare healthy foods (especially transient or homeless populations without access to kitchen supplies or space). Also, healthy/fresh food can be expensive and not readily available at all food shelves.
- In the past, educators have worked on-site at food shelves to do food demos and taste testings, create recipe cards, offer nutrition education signage or displays, and answer questions from clients. Program funders want educators to do direct education to clients, but this is often difficult at food shelves. As a result, they are trying to think about how they can best support food shelves' efforts to assist clients in making healthy choices in other ways.

Suggestions and comments from group members:

- A train-the-trainer model with staff and volunteers might be helpful (SGE is thinking about this already). For example, Little Kitchen has groups of youth who regularly volunteer at the food shelf and could be trained on how to do nutrition education activities. At the recent Feeding American conference, a similar train-the-trainer approach was mentioned (utilizing food shelf clients instead of staff/volunteers). They have a new resource available to promote healthy choices at food shelves: <http://healthyfoodbankhub.feedingamerica.org/>
- It's hard for food shelves to know what food they will have available on a scheduled demo day. SGE can set up a demo within a day or two of order delivery if that helps. Also, space for a demo is sometimes an issue in small food shelves as is having access to running water. Despite the difficulties, food shelves agreed that taste tests and demos are an important way to help clients choose unfamiliar healthy foods. SGE would like to know hours/days that food shelves want demos.

- SGE is doing a nutrition series at the new Catholic Charities Higher Ground site
- Food shelves need ideas for healthy foods/meals for transient and homeless clients
- CNEs need to focus on a particular site or group of sites on a regular basis and serve as the connector between them and program resources. This would help develop relationships and continuity of services offered at each food shelf.
- If a food shelf is interested in working with SGE staff, please call them at 612-625-7070.

Healthy Food Policies

The focus of the health department's SHIP 3 Healthy Food Shelf work will be on helping Network partners create and adopt healthy food policies for their organization. In general, healthy food policies are flexible and modifiable depending on where a food shelf or organization wants to start. They do not have to begin by banning all unhealthy items; the policy can be used to outline the agency's commitment to increasing the amount of healthy options and limiting purchases of less nutritious foods such as soda or candy, for example. For more information on Healthy Food Policies, please see the "Introduction to Healthy Food Policies" power point in the Resources (Trainings, Toolkits, and More) section of the website.

Many food shelves are interested in developing a healthy food policy, but there is a lot of work that needs to be done to educate donors, staff/volunteers, clients, and the general public about what a healthy food policy is and how it can be used to strengthen an organization's commitment to offering healthy options. Messages could focus on:

- Reiterating that food shelf clients in many neighborhoods don't have access to healthy food options in grocery stores; they have to rely on food shelves
- Food shelves are part of a bigger food system that is determining what types of food choices low-income people have. Food shelves are working hard to increase access to healthy food options and have an important role to play in serving as a healthy food source for their community.
- Many low-income people are suffering from obesity, diabetes, and other health problems. Offering healthy food choices at the food shelf helps clients address these issues.

Group members discussed a recent article in the St Paul Pioneer Press that focused on the negative aspects of a recent food policy passed by the Eagan Resource Center. Additional media coverage was done by a few news outlets:

- St Paul Pioneer Press article: http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_24350780/some-food-rejected-east-metro-food-shelves-focus
- WCCO coverage: <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2013/10/21/food-shelves-new-challenge-what-to-do-with-junk-food/>
- KSTP coverage: <http://kstp.com/article/stories/S3197560.shtml?cat=0>

Network partners will have a chance to express their interest in working with MHD staff on the development of healthy food policies and review sample policies at the January 2014 meeting. Additional trainings, resources, and opportunities will be offered to assist in this work throughout 2014 and 2015.